## Camp's mess hall: Millions served

ince Sept. 11, the Camp Roberts Dining Facility has been feeding up to 1,000 soldiers daily and may have to post a sign outside their facility reading

"More than a Billion Served," if the Army upgrades Camp Roberts, Ft. Hunter Liggett, and Camp San Luis Obispo to a Power Projection Platform.

"Nine different units were mobilized since 9-11," said Staff Sergeant Mardell Taylor, manager of the Camp Roberts Mess Facility. "We had to support their mission. So we would feed up to 1,000 soldiers per meal. We would run in shifts, and have them all fed within 90 minutes. But, we're not some fast food restaurant where we compromise quality for quantity. We take extreme pride in delicious food, and want soldiers to come back because they want to, not because we're the only facility available to them. We do it because we like

Camp Roberts' strategic significance re-emerged after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The Army needed a place to train California National Guard soldiers bound for Southwest Asia to protect Patriot Missile Sites guarding the "No Fly Zones" over Northern and Southern Iraq.

Units destined for Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and Homeland Defense NOBLE EAGLE came through Camp Roberts for training and processing before proceeding to their Power Projection Platforms at Ft. Lewis, Washington.

When the California Army National Guard leadership anticipated that certain units would be mobilized for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, they elected to take advantage of Roberts's spacious training areas, ranges, buildings, and mess hall to ensure that these units received in-country training before they arrived in theater.

Most recently, the 81st Infantry Brigade, with nearly 4,000 troops used Camp Roberts' railheads and facilities to prepare for their rotation through Ft. Irwin's National Training Center (NTC) next year in a major training exercise titled, "Multistate Task Force Raven." Taylor's staff has fed them all.

"We know how important good food is to successful training," Taylor said.

Taylor and his four-man staff Sergeants Roy Santillan, Carl Schultz, Daryl Crier, and Specialist Edmund Burk — maintained pace with this increased demand by supplementing their crew with cooks from mobilized units and kitchen patrols—commonly known as KPs in military circles.

Besides a touch of salt, a pinch of pepper, and spoonfuls of various other ingredients, Taylor's recipes call for large cupfuls of hard work, long hours, and dedi-

"We start preparing our food at 0200 hours and often don't quit until 1900 or 2000 hours," Taylor said. "These guys work 19-to 20hour days without complaint. They do it because they love it, not because they have to."

"As a Power Support Platform, Camp Roberts is cur-

Staff Sergeant Mardell Taylor and his popular crew, Sgt. Carl Schultz and Cpl. **Daryl Crier** run a "tight ship."

rently supporting between 10,000 and 12,000 mobilizing troops annually," said Camp Roberts Commander Colonel Bill Hatch.

"If the Army changes Camp Roberts from a Power Support Platform to a Power Projection Platform, more than 60,000 additional army troops could be diverted to Camp Roberts for mobilization."

That means that soldiers will eat somewhere, and where better than the Camp Roberts dining facility where the staff takes pride in preparing quality meals and is inspired by the Camp's tradition of food service.

"We care about troops eating," said Taylor. "Troops get fed, the food tastes good, and it's healthy. Give me a good crew and we'll do it all."

The skillful chefs have conjured up ingenious methods for preparing good food for troops, drawing from both antique and modern culinary equipment.

"We do have some pretty good equipment," said Taylor whose military drill job is Mess Chief for the 1st Battery, 143rd Artillery Regiment. "We have modern ovens, two new grills, and deep fryers.

We still have some of the original equipment, however, but if it lights up, and it isn't dangerous, we'll cook

with it."

Taylor, however, said that Camp Roberts can handle tho sands of more soldiers—perhaps as many as 45,000 if beds are available—if additional soldiers come through its gates.

"We have 24 dining facilities that we can use on this post," Taylor said.

"Eighteen of them are operable. We could employ as many as 180 cooks at any one time. Mobilizing units could provide the cooks and KPs as they are doing now. This would be great training for the cooks."

Taylor's enthusiasm, however, knows no limitations.

"Heck, if we had to, I would pull out as many Mobile Kitchen Trailers as I could find and feed troops," he said.

Camp Roberts Public Affairs Officer, Lisa Cooksey, said the public often overlooks the mess section.

"Everybody talks about S-R-Ping (soldier readiness processing) troops," she said. "But nobody talks about troops need-

ing to eat." A human necessity that is often taken for granted.

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he Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security is managed by Lt. Col. Keith Lochner of Rancho Cucamonga. Lochner and his staff, above, are responsible for providing a realistic military training environment while ensuring safety on the installation and compliance with all environmental laws. The directorate includes operations and training, range control, mobilization branch, security and emergency services.



he Directorate of Installation Support, managed by Lt. Col. Erik Brun of Morro Bay, provides public works, logistics and information management services to the post and units in training. These hard working folks provide the maintenance of the facilities, the provision of water and power to accomodate 5,000 soldiers in barracks and a phone company that services 1,000 phone numbers. The Camp Roberts' staff stand by to support the citizens of our county in the event of a disaster as a congregate care facility



he Directorate of Personnel and Resource Management, managed by Major Judy Mavroleon of Atascadero, provides administrative and personnel management as well as finance, accounting and trianing site agreement support. This directorate also manages all morale, welfare and recreation activities.

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